

HOT DOCS AWARDS \$67,000 CDN IN CASH AND PRIZES TO CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKERS

\$50,000 ROGERS AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARIES
TO BE ANNOUNCED ON SUNDAY, MAY 9
HOT DOCS AUDIENCE AWARDS TO BE ANNOUNCED POST-FESTIVAL

Toronto, ON, May 7, 2021 – Hot Docs is pleased to announce the winning films in this year’s official competition and the recipients of additional awards honouring Canadian filmmakers. The Hot Docs Awards Presentation took place during a special online streaming event on Friday, May 7, on the Hot Docs VOD platform Hot Docs at Home. Eleven awards and \$67,000 CDN in cash and prizes were presented to Canadian and international filmmakers, including awards for Festival films in competition and those recognizing emerging and established filmmakers. Streaming online across Canada on Hot Docs at Home at hotdocs.ca, the 2021 Hot Docs Festival closes on Sunday, May 9.

The Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award was presented to *zo reken* (D&P Emanuel Licha | Canada), in which humanitarian aid workers in Port-au-Prince share candid thoughts about the grim realities of colonialism, international aid and 11 years of unkept promises. Sponsored by DOC and Telefilm Canada, the award includes a \$10,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “Emanuel Licha uses cinematic metaphor to evoke the dignity of a people and the human trap that is the international aid industrial complex. Its minimalist controlled tableaux and carefully chosen conversations provide an unflinching gaze at the violent, often self-defeating consequences of foreign aid.”

The Special Jury Prize – Canadian Feature Documentary was presented to *One of Ours* (D: Yasmine Mathurin | P: Laura Perlmutter, Andrew Nicholas McCann Smith | Canada), about a Haitian-born youth who wrestles with his sense of belonging in his Indigenous adoptive family after being racially profiled. Sponsored by DGC National and DGC Ontario, the award includes a \$5,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “This intimate coming of age story adeptly and lovingly examines the nuances of race, sexuality and family relationships in present day Canada in all its glorious and heartbreaking messiness. With such exceptional access the film reassures the viewer that tenderness and acceptance and respect remain front and center of the story.”

The Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award is given to a first or second-time Canadian filmmaker with a feature film in the Canadian Spectrum program. The award, which includes a \$3,000 cash prize courtesy of Hot Docs, was presented to director Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers for *Kímmapiiyipitssini: The Meaning of Empathy* (P: David Christensen, Lori Lozinski, Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers | Canada), which goes inside the Kainai First Nation in Alberta to show the community’s efforts to heal from the opioid crisis. Jury statement: “*Kímmapiiyipitssini: The Meaning of Empathy* is a story that remained unflinching in its treatment of an issue we’ve often seen only from the outside. The on-going tragedies are portrayed with deep familiarity and care, so every frame beams with a sense of love and support for the dignity of this unjustly wounded culture. With one fiction feature film, and now two documentary feature films to her name, Tailfeathers is a filmmaker on the rise.”

The Best International Feature Documentary Award was given to *Ostrov – Lost Island* (D: Svetlana Rodina, Laurent Stoop | P: Corinna Dästner, Sonja Kilbertus, Urs Schnell | Switzerland), about the denizens of a once-vibrant fishing island in the Caspian Sea, whose elders await Russia’s return to greatness while the younger generation hopes for a new future. Supported by the Panicaro

Hot Docs is a charitable, not-for-profit organization committed to advancing the art of documentary and supporting opportunities for independent filmmakers.

Foundation, the award includes a \$10,000 cash prize courtesy of the Panicaro Foundation. Jury statement: "The jury was taken by this gorgeous, insightful film. The access the filmmakers had was remarkable and resulted in a truly powerful cinematic experience which shows the everyday reality of people in Russia." Hot Docs is an Academy Award qualifying festival for international feature documentaries, and as the winner of this award *Ostrov – Lost Island* will qualify for consideration in the Best Documentary Feature category of the annual Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run, provided it complies with Academy rules.

The Special Jury Prize – International Feature Documentary was given to *School of Hope* (D: Mohamed El Aboudi | P: Pertti Veijalainen | Finland, France, Morocco), in which Morocco's Oulad Boukais tribe, suffering from extended drought, sets up a school in a small clay building to ensure their children's futures. Sponsored by A&E, the award includes a \$5,000 cash prize. Jury statement: "The jury was impressed with the filmmaker's devotion to this story and immersive technique which created a visually touching story about the realities of climate change and the power of education."

The Emerging International Filmmaker Award is given to a first or second-time international filmmaker with a feature film in the International Spectrum program. It was presented to director Annabel Verbeke for *Four Seasons in a Day* (P: Frederik Nicolai, Eric Goossens, Karl-Emil Rikardsen, Ljubo Zdjelarević, Lukas Trimonis | Belgium, Norway, Croatia), in which ferry passengers travelling between British-controlled Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland candidly express their opinions about Brexit and the border. The award, supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation, includes a \$3,000 cash prize. Jury statement: "In only her second feature documentary, the director already shows mastery of the verité craft in this film which unveils itself to be more complex and universal than it first appears." In the Emerging International Filmmaker category, the jury also acknowledged director Margaret Byrne for *Any Given Day* (P: Margaret Byrne | USA) with an honourable mention. Jury statement: "Margaret Byrne shows real potential and talent in this brave, vulnerable and subjective documentary."

The award for Best Mid-Length Documentary was presented to *Silent Voice* (D: Reka Valerik | P: David Hurst | France, Belgium), about a young gay MMA fighter who, after fleeing his homophobic family in Chechnya, struggles to build a new identity in Brussels against the chilling backdrop of voicemails from home. Sponsored by British Pathé, the award includes a \$5,000 cash prize. Jury statement: "For its sensitive use of cinema to convey an act of healing from extreme sexual violence, the jury bestows the award to *Silent Voice*. The filmmaker delivers a powerful depiction of forced migration—both from a country and a family—and horrific discrimination, with an observational lens that intrudes into a private space with intelligence and care." In the Best Mid-Length Documentary category, the jury also acknowledged *Sunny* (D: Keti Machavariani | P: Tsisana Khundadze, Nato Sikharulidze | Georgia) with an honourable mention. Jury statement: "The filmmaker presents a charming character portrait that evolves into a compassionate, complex view of a society in transition. Many questions are asked, few are definitively answered—and yet, a beautiful empathetic view of humanity is conveyed in all its complexities and aspirations."

The Best International Short Documentary Award was presented to *The Doll* (D&P: Elahe Esmaili | Iran), about a 14-year-old girl whose future is being decided by her father, whose true intentions are revealed through a series of shockingly frank interviews. The award includes a \$3,000 cash prize courtesy of Hot Docs. Jury statement: "The jury proudly awards the prize for the best international short film to *The Doll* for its complex and nuanced portrait of a family caught between traditions and

personal values. With a sensitive and attentive look at her subjects, the filmmaker offers us a film of incredible richness on a human experience that would be easy to judge from a Western point of view. Unsettling, endearing, and sometimes even shocking, this film will not leave anyone indifferent."

The Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary was presented to *Ain't No Time for Women* (D: Sarra El Abed | P: Isabelle Grignon-Francke | Canada), about a group of women who gathered at a hairdresser on the eve of the 2019 presidential election in Tunis, transforming the space into a lively town square and mirroring the country's turmoil and generational divide. The award includes a \$3,000 cash prize courtesy of John and Betty Youson. Jury statement: "The jury was moved by this immersive and deeply engaging film. The cinematography and editing pulls the viewer into the women's space and conversations and shows how indomitable the spirit can be, even in the face of national corruption." In the Best Canadian Short Documentary category, the jury also acknowledged *The Hairdresser* (D&P: Lorraine Price | Canada) with an honourable mention. Jury statement: "We were profoundly moved by this film that highlights the importance of not robbing those at the end of life of basic human dignity. The film was beautiful, delicate and brought great comfort."

Hot Docs is an Academy Award qualifying festival for short documentaries and, as winners of the Best International Short Documentary Award and the Best Canadian Short Documentary Award respectively, *The Doll* and *Ain't No Time for Women* will qualify for consideration in the Documentary Short Subject category of the annual Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run, provided they comply with Academy rules.

The Lindalee Tracey Award, which honours an emerging Canadian filmmaker with a passionate point of view, a strong sense of social justice and a sense of humour, was presented to Cailleah Scott-Grimes for her film *Between Us*. Scott-Grimes will receive a \$5,000 cash prize courtesy of the Lindalee Tracey Fund, \$5,000 in post-production services from SIM, and a beautiful hand-blown glass sculpture by Andrew Kuntz, specially commissioned to honour Lindalee. Scott-Grimes' short doc *Rockin' the Coffin* is currently streaming at the 2021 Festival.

Toronto-based producer Lalita Krishna, producer of *Bangla Surf Girls* and president of In Sync Media, received the Don Haig Award, announced earlier this week. The award is given to an outstanding independent Canadian producer with a film in the Festival in recognition of his/her creative vision, entrepreneurship and track record for nurturing emerging talent and comes with a \$5,000 cash prize courtesy of the Don Haig Foundation. As part of the award, the recipient can name an emerging female documentary filmmaker to receive a \$5,000 cash prize courtesy of Hot Docs, and an industry pass for Hot Docs 2022. Krishna named Bangladeshi filmmaker Elizabeth D. Costa, director of *Bangla Surf Girls*, as the recipient of this prize.

The 2021 awards for films in competition were determined by four juries.

The Canadian Feature Documentary Jury: Raul Niño Zambran (Senior Programmer, IDFA); Michèle Stephenson (filmmaker); Patricia Rozema (writer, director and producer).

The International Feature Documentary Jury: Sheila Nevins (Executive Producer, MTV Networks); Kazuhiro Soda (filmmaker); Toni Kamau (producer).

The Mid-Length Jury: Atom Egoyan (filmmaker); José F. Rodriguez (Programmer, Tribeca Film Festival); and Rasha Salti (Commissioning Editor, Experimental Documentary Program, La Lucarne at ArteFrance).

The Shorts Jury: Miryam Charles (director and producer); Poh Si Teng (producer); Adriana Chartrand (Institute Manager at imagineNATIVE).

The Rogers Audience Award will be announced at an online live event on Sunday, May 9. Generously established by the Rogers Group of Funds and determined by audience ballot, the Award will honour the top five Canadian documentaries in the audience poll and will present each director with a cash prize of \$10,000 CDN.

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[Hot Docs](#), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs will present its 28th annual edition online from April 29-May 9, 2021, during which a full roster of industry conference sessions, market programs and networking events will be held for Canadian and international delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

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Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC Gem as its Signature Partner; Crave and Netflix as its Presenting Partners; and Telefilm Canada and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

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